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ABSTRACT

This examination of parent choice among public schools in Massachusetts begins with an expanded version of remarks made by C. L. Glenn to the Board of the National Education Association describing the parent choice options available in Massachusetts and the ways in which they have developed. Approximately four of five minority students in Massachusetts and one of five white students are enrolled in school systems that offer parents an opportunity to make choices about the public school their children will attend and that foster choice through deliberate efforts to increase the distinctiveness of various schools and to provide accurate parent information. Also summarized is C. L. Glenn's testimony before the first hearing of the National Governors' Association (May 3, 1985) concerning the Massachusetts experience in desegregation recruitment. These addresses are followed by enrollment information for magnet schools in Massachusetts and a list of school systems developing plans to expand parent choice. Following the enrollment figures a paper, "Maximizing Parental Choice and Effective Desegregation Outcomes: The Cambridge Plan" (M. J. Alves), describes the voluntary desegregation efforts in Cambridge (Massachusetts). Sixteen tables summarize enrollment information. There is a 16-item list of resources for additional information. (SLD)

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Massachusetts Department of Education
Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity

FAMILY CHOICE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Report to the State Board of Education

UD 028 614

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January 1986

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January 1986

The Massachusetts Board of Education has been concerned to promote parent choice among public schools, in the context of integrated urban education, for twenty years. Over the past ten a momentum has developed which involves more cities in the Commonwealth each year, and which enjoys strong legislative support.

A few months ago the Board directed the Commissioner to have a report prepared by the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity, which bears primary responsibility for supporting parent choice, on the scope, variety, and impact of this development. The promotion of parent choice was included, for the first time, in the FY 1986 Operational Plan.

This interest is not confined to Massachusetts, though it has taken more varied forms and received more state financial support here than in any other state. Secretary of Education William Bennett has included "Choice" among the three primary goals of his administration. President Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers has expressed his support for "public school choices," citing Massachusetts as his example of how this can strengthen education and the professionalism of teachers. The National Governors' Association has placed "Choice" first among the critical issues in education which it will study this year.

The report which follows includes the latest figures on voluntary enrollments in "magnet schools" and under the Metco program, and a listing of those school systems which are currently developing plans to expand parent choice.

These figures are preceded by expanded versions of my recent remarks to the Board of the National Education Association, "Putting Choice to Work for Public Education," and of my testimony before the first hearing of the National Governors' Association, "The Massachusetts Experience with Public School Choice."

Following the enrollment figures is a paper by my colleague Michael Alves, "Maximizing Parental Choice and Effective Desegregation Outcomes: the Cambridge Plan." This is a much abbreviated version of the doctoral dissertation which he is just completing for the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and parallels the expert testimony which he has given this Fall for the Plaintiffs in the San Jose, California desegregation remedy hearings.

A theme common to his paper and mine is that choice can be a powerful energy for the improvement of public education and equity--if properly guided and encouraged--or for its further weakening.

Choice is not an unmixed blessing, nor do we support it as a panacea for all educational problems. As both of us show, the past abuse of "freedom of choice" in Massachusetts and around the country fully justifies the reservations if not the hostility of many public education leaders.

The basic reality, however, is that choice cannot be denied. Parents do choose schools for their children, in countless ways, and their ability to choose is directly related to their wealth, influence and other advantages in our society.

What we have sought to do, working closely with more than a dozen urban school systems, is to find ways to put parent choice to work to strengthen public education. We have sought to give the parents of minority children and of poor children an equal opportunity to make educational choices for their daughters and sons.

In doing so, we have found the schools themselves improving, teachers and principals expressing a new satisfaction with their own efforts, a new commitment to continual response to student needs and the concerns of parents.

Our report Equity, Choice and Effective Urban Schools (April 1985) allowed the staff of twenty-five schools to speak for themselves, about what they are doing to create schools which work for urban students. This coming April we expect to give the Board a similar report, with more student achievement data, more specifics on how schools are developing their diversity, more emphasis on excellence in teaching.

Each of the school systems discussed in this report will be carrying out evaluations during the current school year, including structured interviews with parents who have chosen magnet schools--or decided against them--and assessment of the extent to which racial integration is leading to mutual respect and friendship. This represents another aspect of the story of the urban education renaissance in Massachusetts, and we hope to tell it in a special report at this time in 1987.

The present report does not provide such information, and for that reason it cannot tell the full story of the impact of choice on urban schools in Massachusetts. By focusing on this one dimension, at the Board's direction, we seek to explain the organizational context within which effective education is developing in cities across the Commonwealth.

Charles L. Glenn

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PUTTING CHOICE TO WORK FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

by Dr. Charles L. Glenn, Director
Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity
Massachusetts Department of Education

THREE PRINCIPLES

I start with three principles which are absolutely basic to discussion of school choice--or any other aspect of educational policy.

The first is that the primary responsibility for a child's development, including education, rests with the parents. "The child is not the mere creature of the State," as the Supreme Court observed in its 1925 ruling in Pierce v. Society of Sisters. This may seem obvious, but there have been governments in other nations which have asserted or acted upon the principle that the child does belong to the State.

We have public schools in order to make it possible for parents, whatever their circumstances and their own ability, to meet this responsibility. Since some parents, for one reason or another, do not meet their obligations, we protect children by requiring that they be educated, though not that they be educated in a public school if the parents are able to provide an equivalent alternative.

The second principle is that, because we consider education so significant that we are prepared to require it, we have a special responsibility, as a society, to assure that it is provided fairly. This means that we seek to provide the best possible education for each student. This cannot mean providing the same instruction and support for every student, but rather a diversity which responds to diverse needs and capacity, and which overcomes, so far as possible, any disabilities which result from race, poverty, or handicap.

The third principle is that there are certain things which every American child should learn, including various skills and essential knowledge about our common heritage. Here I would not go so far as Horace Mann and his fellow-reformers, who wished the schools to inculcate the same values in every student; that would infringe upon the rights of parents. We will always differ on many things, as a people, but those differences should not be founded upon ignorance of each other and of the much that we share.

The structure of education, the ways in which we deliver educational services, should be directly subject to and serve these principles. No aspect of the present structure of education should be considered sacrosanct, but all should be open to testing by these three standards.

WHEN I OPPOSE SCHOOL CHOICE

Although I support greatly increased parent choice in public education, it is unfortunately true that many of the policies under which such choice has operated around the country have worked directly against one or more of the principles stated above. These effects have led many supporters of public education--including the National Education Association--to oppose the extension of choice. They have been right, given their understanding of what parent choice involves, and it is important to acknowledge these concerns before arguing that all of them can be met by a well-designed policy and program.

These are some of the negative effects which can be associated with "open enrollment" or unrestricted choice:

- two classes of schools may be created, one elite and the other regarded and functioning as second-rate;
- racial and social class separation may increase;
- sophisticated parents may obtain an unfair advantage for their children;
- additional resources may be unfairly distributed--or scarce resources diverted;
- many parents may become confused, frustrated, and more apathetic than before;
- top-down decisions about the special identities or clienteles of particular schools may reduce further the professional responsibility of school staff; and

- in an attempt to "catch the eye" of parents, attention may be diverted from the basics of education to "grooviness."

To those who have any of these concerns, perhaps based upon sad experience, I can only say that we have found ways to respond to each of them in our public school systems of choice in seven Massachusetts cities--including our three largest--and we are developing such systems of choice in six others. Without going into details, the answer is a careful orchestration of the available choices and how recruitment and assignments are carried out.
A program of choice which will enhance parent responsibility for educational decisions, which will promote equity, and which will do both without sacrificing the common learning which is so vital to a functioning democracy requires constant fine-tuning, constant attention and adjustment.

We call this "conditional choices" as contrasted with "open enrollment." As wide a range of educational choices as possible is made available to parents, in response to their expressed preferences and concerns, with three important responsibilities reserved to a central coordinating office:

1) providing current and accurate information on all available choices;
2) making assignments which respect parent choices so far as possible, given the constraint of assuring equity and other essential goals; and
3) continually developing and modifying the range of options available so that as high a proportion of parents as possible obtain their choices, subject to these constraints.

In effect, this central function involves responsibility for assuring that everyone has an equal chance and equal information, that the benefits to every student are maximized, and that the overall goals of the system continue to be met through a greatly-diversified delivery-system.

WHEN I SUPPORT SCHOOL CHOICE

Although I share the concerns which others have expressed about the effects of choice, having to do essentially with equity and with national unity, I am convinced from experience that a system of "conditional choices" can avoid the negative consequences and have powerful positive results. "Conditional choices" can put the power of choice to work for public education. These are some of the reasons why I am convinced that we must not fail to face the challenge of choice:

- Choice is <u>in fact</u> being exercised to an increasing extent in education, though in ways which weaken rather than strengthen public education in its traditional role as the common school of the nation. Parents who have options and resources continue to send their children to suburban in preference to urban schools, and to non-public in preference to urban or suburban public schools. It may be that those who feel most strongly about choice today are Black parents living in central cities; certainly the long waiting lists for our urban-suburban Metco program in Boston suggests that. It is, by and large, those least in a position to exercise choice who desire it most strongly; the 1985 Gallup Poll on education found that minority respondents favor education vouchers by 59% to 26%, central city residents by 53% to 32%, and respondents between 18 and 29 (the prime child-bearing ages) by 55% to 31%. Shouldn't public education, with its professed special concern for these groups, find ways to respond to their desire for more choices about their children's education?

- "Conditional choices" strengthen initiative and accountability at the schoolhouse level, helping staff to develop that shared sense of mission so essential to an effective school. Teachers and principals gain increased freedom of action to express their professionalism to the benefit of the students by pleasing some parents very much rather than anxiously avoiding offending anyone. Contrary to school improvement strategies which seek to impose additional constraints and requirements, "conditional choice" elicits the energy and leadership essential to real school improvement from those in the schoolhouse.

- Parent satisfaction increases markedly under a system of "conditional choices," as parents are able to have a direct influence on the type of school environment and educational strategy to which their children are exposed through simply choosing that school which most corresponds to their own concerns. The apathy or debilitating conflicts which characterize so many efforts to bring parents into school governance are avoided; parents "vote with their [children's] feet," and then tend to be strong supporters of the schools which they have chosen. In a pluralistic democracy it is essential for public institutions to find ways of accommodating diversity wherever possible, and thus to gain wholehearted support for those common convictions which must bind us together.

- "Conditional choices," by allowing public schools to become more diverse, make it possible to match the needs of each student effectively. It has been necessary for too many parents--and indeed for public school authorities--to place students in non-public schools because the climate, disciplinary practices, or course offerings of the standard public school could not meet their needs.

- Teacher satisfaction is increased significantly in schools in which they have worked together to define the educational mission and the ground-rules of daily life together. Teachers feel that they have increased their control over their work, for the benefit of rather than at the expense of the students, and they enjoy the reduced conflict in a school where staff and parents are in agreement. To the extent that they develop specializations as a result of the increased diversity of schools, they enhance their own professionalism.

For all of these reasons, "conditional choices" work powerfully for school improvement, enhanced morale on all sides, and increased public support for public education.

THE MASSACHUSETTS EXPERIENCE WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

Massachusetts is frequently cited as a state which has given particular emphasis to parent choice in public education, and has backed that up with generous state funding. We are asked, How did that happen, what forms does it take, and how does it work?

The historical question would perhaps be of limited interest were it not for what it teaches us about some of the pitfalls of an unquestioning endorsement of "choice." After all, as we will see, the impetus to the development of a variety of forms of choice in Massachusetts was a state initiative to promote desegregation. This initiative, as it worked itself out, was as concerned to **limit** choice as it was to promote it; indeed, desegregation planning generally assumes--incorrectly--that "freedom of choice" must be sacrificed in the interest of educational justice and racial integration.

If the Massachusetts experience were relevant only to state desegregation initiatives, it would be useful only to those states which have made that a major priority. It **has** been useful to such states as Ohio and Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania, which have asked us to advise them on the development of their own equal educational opportunity strategies, and the "bottom line" for our efforts continues to be an unwavering commitment to equity and integration.

The assumption which has changed, as a result of our experience in Massachusetts, is that this can occur only through **state mandates** to school systems and through **mandatory assignments** for children.

It is because this assumption has changed, and we have continued to explore a variety of ways to achieve equity and integration while also promoting other educational goals, that the Massachusetts experience is relevant to states for which race desegregation is not an urgent issue, either because it has already been accomplished or because minority students are few.

What are the "other educational goals" which we have been pursuing as an essential part of our equity and integration effort? They include

- school-level initiatives for effective education
- responsiveness to parent hopes and concerns, through regular surveys,

involvement in school planning, and choice of schools

- adaptation to the individual needs and capacities of all students--not just those with special needs--through diversified instruction
- development of distinctive, "flavorful" schools, committed to pleasing some parents very much rather than blandly trying not to displease any
- concern for the "non-academic" aspects of the curriculum, including the development of multi-cultural awareness and respect, character and citizenship
- support for the professionalism of staff, as expressed in the development and "marketing" of distinctive approaches to education
- offering educational options, such as "two-way bilingual education" and curriculum centred around the arts, which could not be made the standard for all students

It may appear strange that such a broad educational agenda has developed under the guise of equity and integration, but a moment's reflection will show that it could not be otherwise. The effort to achieve educational equity is a process which leads inevitably far beyond the removal of barriers, just as the effort to achieve integration leads beyond bringing students together in the same place.

Aren't such educational objectives shared by many states and school systems for which race desegregation is not an issue? Of course, but the reality is that it was the **crisis** created by desegregation, in Massachusetts, which stimulated and continues to stimulate creativity and a willingness to implement new approaches to defining and delivering education.

Does this mean that the positive effects of public school diversity and parent choice can be experienced only in the context of desegregation? Not at all. Desegregation may have been the crisis to which Massachusetts was responding when we developed a variety of approaches to diversity and choice, but public education nationwide is facing a challenge of comparable seriousness: the wide-spread loss of confidence in our ability to respond to the demands of the times, to the concerns and convictions of parents, to the needs of students for those skills and those personal

qualities which their own futures and that of our society require.

Diversity and choice are consistent with the operating style and sustaining principles of our pluralistic democracy, and it is high time that we in public education saw that they need not conflict with our other commitments, to fairness, to opportunity, to racial reconciliation and respect, and to excellence of mind and heart.

It is possible to distinguish a succession of stages through which policies and programs related to choice have passed over the past twenty years.

- **allowing** choice--and supporting "positive" choice with free transportation
- **preventing** inappropriate or "negative" choice
- **extending** choice across school district boundaries
- **expanding** choice with new (and well-located) facilities
- **encouraging** choice with program development and recruitment
- **universalizing** choice by making it the basis for all school assignments

Each of these stages has left its imprint, explaining an aspect of the present arrangements (it would be an exaggeration to call them a system!) for choice in Massachusetts public schools. Reviewing the stages briefly and noting the errors or limitations of each will be more instructive than any purely abstract discussion could be.

BLACK PARENTS CHOOSE A BETTER EDUCATION

More than twenty years ago Black parents in Boston began to insist that the public schools were not responding adequately to the needs of their children, and indeed that they were being discriminated against in the allocation of resources, including the most competent staff. With the support of the NAACP, these concerns led to a major conflict with the School Committee, to two one-day boycotts of the public schools by thousands of Black students, and to the passage of the state Racial Imbalance Law in 1965.

While these controversies were going on, a growing number of Black parents took advantage of an "open enrollment" policy which had been adopted in 1962 at the request of the NAACP to enroll their children in schools in white, middle-class sections of the city. By 1967 over two thousand minority students were enrolled in majority-white schools under this policy.

Eight hundred of these students were taking part in "Operation Exodus," started by the parents themselves. Parents raised money for buses and other expenses in all of the ways familiar to the Black church and community, as well as by gifts and grants from outside sympathizers. Eventually, in 1969, the State Legislature amended the Racial Imbalance Law to provide for the costs of transportation which promoted racial balance.

The impetus for this organized effort by Operation Exodus was the rejection, by the Boston School Committee, of a proposal by the superintendent to bus Black students from overcrowded schools to predominantly-white schools with available seats. The Committee based its 1965 decision on opposition to "busing of children in any form for any reason, and under any conditions," an example of the political posturing which was to cost Boston so dearly in the years ahead. After all, only Black children would have been transported under this proposal, and Black parents and community leaders were asking that this occur!

The lesson of this first stage of the development of programs to support choice was that many inner city parents were willing to go to considerable trouble and even sacrifice to take advantage of choice, even if it was offered grudgingly, and that they were relatively sophisticated about what they are looking for. Operation Exodus would not enroll students in **any** predominantly white school with vacant seats; this organization of Black parents made a careful assessment of the welcome and support which they believed that their childreen would receive, and enrolled students accordingly.

CONTROVERSY OVER INAPPROPRIATE CHOICE

Along with hundreds of choices by Black parents seeking to educate their children in an integrated and educationally-superior setting, there were hundreds of choices being made by white parents to take their children **out** of racially-integrated schools. This was particularly the case with

those who lived in neighborhoods experiencing racial change, for whom their "neighborhood schools" were no longer so appealing when they began to enroll a number of Black students. The "open enrollment" policy of the Boston School Committee (and similar policies in other cities) was used by these parents in a way which quickly made a number of schools in racially-mixed areas become heavily minority in enrollment.

The Chairman of the Boston School Committee admitted in late 1970 that nearly nine hundred white students had transferred "out of their mainly Negro neighborhood schools to mainly white schools elsewhere."

An analysis by my staff in early 1971 determined that 1,315 transfers were promoting integration, 967 were promoting segregation, and 3,625 were "neutral" in the sense that they were between two majority-white or manority-Black schools. Even many of the latter were negative in their impact on integration, since students transferring from a 20% Black school (in a racilly-changing area) to a school with no Black students were hastening the segregation of the first school; such transfers had a "snowball effect." This was most notably the effect with several intermediate schools which became predominantly Black though located in areas which were still residentially integrated, because of the transfer of white students out of their "neighborhood schools."

As a result of concern about the segregative effect of such transfers, the State Board adopted a policy that, in school systems where racial balance was a problem,

> children may enroll in a school other than that of their assignment, on a space/grade available basis, if, and only if, such enrollment decreases racial imbalance. . . in his school of regular assignment and/or in the selected school.

Boston officials opposed an adamant resistance to this policy, citing the "parental choice, as to school attendance, historically granted to families in changing neighborhoods." In other words, they conceded that it was their conscious practice to allow white parents to take their children out of integrated schools to enroll them in all-white schools.

Ironically, the Boston School Committee had been less accommodating in the early 1850s, when Yankee parents sought to transfer their children out of schools with a growing Irish enrollment. "Though some transfers were granted," historian Stanley Schultz observes, "members of the School Committee tried to discourage the practice," believing that it would have a negative effect on the education of the Irish children. "To further concentrate one ethnic and income group in individual schools appeared educationally unsound and morally unwise."

In 1971 the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination issued a ruling that open enrollment in Boston had been administered "in an arbitrary and disciminatory manner," and ordered the system to operate the program in such a way that it would increase the information and options available to minority parents while reducing the isolation of minority students.

The negative impact of many transfers in the early 1970s and the refusal of the Boston School Committee to impose limits on them were among the main factors which led to a State Board decision in 1971 to withhold funding, and to the Federal District Court ruling in 1974 that the segregation of the Boston schools was fostered by official actions. The existence of similar policies and practices in other Massachusetts cities had a similar effect, as we found when we worked with them to determine why certain schools became "racially identifiable." Whether by Court order or by local school committee policy, controls have now been placed on transfers which would have a negative effect on racial integration.

In retrospect, I regret that our concern to check an abuse--and it was an abuse--took so little account of the concerns of parents and of their quite understandable desire to exercise **some** control of the education of their children. There **were** racial motivations, but our subsequent experience suggests that it might have been possible to increase acceptance of integration by providing opportunities to choose among integrated schools. It was in part the helpless and powerless feeling which many white parents developed as their neighborhoods and their schools changed which created a panic and even, in some, a rage. Expanded choice, without compromise on the importance of integration, could have increased their sense of being in control.

It may be that the demagogery of some Boston elected officials and the rigidity of the school system would have made impossible a more flexible approach, but if we could do

it over I would press strongly for strategies to stabilize the racially-transitional areas with some educational options.

One lesson of this second stage was that unrestricted choice can lead to racial separation and neighborhood instability; choice is not an unmixed blessing, and public policy should seek to harness it to positive ends and restrain it from harmful effects.

Another lesson, learned only in retrospect, is that the attempt to avoid such problems by an exclusively negative control on transfers produces other negative consequences. Balked in their desire to transfer among public schools, parents simply withdraw their children, or move, or falsify their addresses, and thus reclaim the freedom which we are seeking to take away.

With this "freedom," as with so many, there is a certain ambiguity. It is a freedom to discriminate against people of color, to frustrate their attempts to seek integrated schools for their children by abandoning those schools; it is also a freedom to make important decisions about one's own children, to seek for them the best available school. The latter is essential to our sense of parental responsibility and the demands of love, while the former goes contrary to our deepest values as a society.

Fifteen years ago the only way we could think of to protect the rights of minority children was to seek to limit the freedom of white parents to make decisions about their own children. Even today we start from the assumption that there can be no absolute right to attend any public school, without regard to the impact of that decision upon the rights of others or upon those goals and principles which we have adopted as a society, but we have learned that this is not a "zero-sum game." With sound planning and thoughtful implementation it is possible to increase the options available to white parents without doing so at the expense of minority parents and students.

EXTENDING CHOICE ACROSS BARRIERS

The third stage in the development of approaches to choice in Massachusetts public education was the attempt to reduce the significance of some of the governmental barriers which limit the exercise of choice, especially by parents whose poverty or race limits their choice of community.

The Metco Program, under which minority students from inner-city schools attend suburban schools on a voluntary basis, was in a sense the logical next step after Operation Exodus demonstrated how strongly minority parents wanted the opportunity to enroll their children in "better" schools. Exodus allowed them to break out of the ghetto to other sections of Boston where better education seemed to be available, but still came up against the city limits. Metco, which goes beyond those limits, has been a considerable and long-term success.

Metco began operation in 1966-67, with two hundred students attending schools in seven suburban Boston systems; by 1971-72 there were nearly 1,600 students, and for the past decade the numbers have hovered just over three thousand, in forty suburban Boston and Springfield systems.

Starting in the 1969-70 school year the state has paid all expenses of this program, including transportation, the cost of instruction in the host school, and support staff in each suburban community. Student placements (except for the small Springfield-area program) are made by the non-profit Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, a Black-run organization whose large staff is also funded by the state. Annual appropriations are running over $11 million, with no apparent slackening of legislative support for this program, while there is a substantial waiting-list of minority parents who wish to enroll their children.

One lesson of this third stage of the extension of choice was that municipal boundaries need not restrict educational choice. This means that it is possible to make progress toward "equal educational opportunity" without sacrificing the virtues of local decision-making for some form of metropolitan governance structure. Students can enroll across municipal boundaries, and state funds can support the full cost of educating urban students, without basic structural changes.

The Metco experience over nearly twenty years has also taught us how essential it is that appropriate support be provided for urban minority students--even those whose families are thoroughly middle-class--enrolled in suburban schools. Two principles have guided the state's annual review of each system's plan to participate in the program: Metco students must be treated in every respect as though they were resident students, and there must be at least one staff member whose full-time responsibility it is to provide support and advocacy for them. It may appear that there is some contradiction between these principles,

but it is a deliberate ambiguity, a determination to combine the best features of "belonging" and special treatment. And it works; by all accounts and standards, the Metco program has been a solid success for the great majority of the students.

A third lesson which we have learned is that sometimes an ad hoc arrangement can in fact serve quite well in the absence of the sort of comprehensive policy which would satisfy the policy planner. There are severe limitations on Metco: it relies too exclusively upon annual appropriations, it operates "one way" with only minority students able to transfer, it does nothing to strengthen the urban schools and indeed removes many of the students (and parents) who might help to improve them. These are all problems, and we have made attempts over the years to deal with each of them, but meanwhile the program rolls quietly on, with hundreds of lives changed and a few graduates now beginning to work as staff. If we had insisted on a comprehensive metropolitan plan (and several years and a great deal of money were expended in the effort to develop one) before beginning to serve students, we would undoubtedly still be talking!

EXPANDING CHOICE

Simply allowing parents to take advantage of available seats in out-of-district schools can have only a limited effect; it is contingent upon the accidents of student population in residential districts. Since the decline in birth-rate has impacted primarily white and middle-class areas, while some inner-city schools are bursting at the seams with children (including those of new migrants and refugees) a "space available" policy tends to allow movement in only one direction.

This creates two problems of equity or fairness. One is that the "burden" of movement rests exclusively on minority students, as in the Exodus and Metco programs described above, or in the voluntary transfer programs which have been implemented in Chicago and other cities as a way of creating at least a measure of integration in white areas without "bussing" white students. The other problem is that the sorts of educational options and magnet programs which will be described below can only be developed in schools in white areas, since only there is space available to attract "magnet" students. Thus such schools are strengthened while those in minority areas are not.

State law in Massachusetts helps to address this problem by providing very substantial financial support--originally 65%, currently 90% of the cost of construction, including interest--for school facilities (or additions to existing facilities) which provide the additional space needed to permit voluntary transfers which increase racial integration. This provision also applies to new facilities which are so located that they will draw a "naturally" integrated enrollment, though in most cases there is a voluntary component to such plans as well.

Under this construction provision more than $400 million in school construction and renovation has been approved over the past twenty years. Note that this affects not only "magnet schools," but also many schools which are enrolled on a semi-voluntary basis, as in Boston. Thus, for example, the Lee and Mattahunt Schools in Boston, though not magnets, draw their white enrollment partly under a new provision of the assignment policy which allows students to choose among a number of options.

Another way to increase the the capacity available for voluntary transfers is through adjusting attendance districts to reduce the number of students assigned on the basis of residence to a particular school. This was an important aspect of the early stages of developing magnet options in Worcester.

A third way to increase available capacity is to relocate programs to which students are assigned on the basis of their educational needs. In several Massachusetts cities, there was an undue concentration of the special needs and bilingual programs in inner-city schools. By locating these programs elsewhere it was possible to make space for increased enrollment.

These last measure must be used with sensitivity; it would not be appropriate to place an increased burden upon the students who require such programs. Too often they have been displaced again and again to suit the convenience of the school system, and we have been concerned to assure that whatever decisions are made will bring them solid benefits. In one city, for example, discussion with Hispanic parents and community leaders revealed a concern on their part that students requiring bilingual programs were forced to change schools every two years. A facility was identified which, though further from the concentration of Hispanic population, could offer a K-6 sequence of instruction in the same building. This was accepted as a benefit worth the additional transportation required. As a

result, one of the schools out of which the bilingual program was moved was able to develop a highly-successful magnet program to attract white students and thus become racially-integrated.

In the case of substantially-separate special needs programs, it is usually the case that students are drawn from a wide area, and the location in one facility or another does not represent a hardship. All too often, we have found, such programs were placed in inner-city schools simply because the more influential parents elsewhere objected to accommodating them in "their" schools. A move to another facility, with assurances against further moves for a number of years, can be a net gain for these students as well.

These measures to expand the space available for school choice illustrate the importance of sound planning and active efforts to make its benefits available to as many students as possible. School systems have always made decisions about where schools will be located and who will attend them; increased parent choice is not achieved by administrators simply folding their hands and letting it happen.

ENCOURAGING CHOICE WITH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND RECRUITMENT

The first "magnet schools" in Massachusetts were developed in the late 1960s as a means of attracting white students to inner-city schools. In February 1967 the Boston School Committee, under pressure from the State Board, proposed construction of the school which would become the William Monroe Trotter, in Roxbury. This school would be built much larger than the school which it was replacing, with space held for white students who would be recruited from across the city. As a result of intensive publicity after the school opened, the Trotter was able to develop a waiting list of white students by 1970-71, and has remained over-subscribed ever since.

A similar approach was developed in New Bedford, where a small inner-city school in a Cage Verdean neighborhood, the Green School, was threatened with closing in order to satisfy State demands that "racial imbalance" be eliminated. Parents launched a successful effort to attract white children from a section of the city where many liberal college faculty lived.

Several other magnet schools were set up in the early 1970s, and when the Massachusetts Legislature amended the Racial Imbalance Law in 1974, a new section was added to authorize funding for magnet schools and programs [the appropriation for this purpose is currently $5,050,000]. Over the subsequent ten years a variety of magnet school options were developed in ten Massachusetts cities, with others actively exploring this possibility. Specifics on magnet school operating in the 1985-86 school years are provided in the following section.

A great deal could be--and has been--written about magnet schools; here I will mention only a few of my conclusions after fifteen years of overseeing these schools in Massachusetts, fourteen of them as a "magnet school parent:!

- Magnet schools are not necessarily the same as "alternative schools." The latter are generally of two types: schools developed to attract highly sophisticated parents seeking a more "child centered" program than is offered by most public schools, with a variety of special enrichment activities, and schools developed to meet the needs of students--often poor and minority students--who for various reasons cannot handle the structured expectations of an ordinary public school and require a different kind of environment, typically with a high staff ratio. The first is an alternative to private schools, the second to dropping out of or disrupting a public school.

  We have operated a few "alternative schools," as described above, with magnet school funds. For example, the Cambridge Alternative Program (now called Graham/Parks) started as a school appealing to parents wishing a child-centered program in the spirit of the late 1960s, while the Alternative Junior High School in Springfield was a response to the needs of disruptive students. While such options are certainly possible (and even advisable) under a magnet school plan, they are not central to what our magnet schools are all about.

- Neither are magnet schools intended, in Massachusetts, to be "elite schools." There are a few selective magnet schools, the three high schools in Boston admission to which is by

competitive examination, but these are the exceptions. Even in these cases--which include the venerable Boston Latin School--magnet school funding is provided only because there is a Court-ordered admission policy intended to increase minority enrollment, and the magnet funds are used only to provide the support services which many of the minority students need to meet the high academic expectations for which their earlier schooling had not prepared them.

- We try to prevent magnet schools from becoming "super schools" through the provision of so many extra resources that it is unfair to students attending non-magnet schools. We stress that magnet schools should not be "better," in the sense that other schools are complacently allowed to be worse, but different. Some are different by offering very distinctive ways of organizing the entire program, as in the cases of the Arts and City schools in Lowell, while others are different because of the educational philosophy which (in theory, at least) informs every aspect of school life. Thus some magnet schools in Worcester identify themselves to prospective parents as "traditional" or "child-centred."

- This does not mean that magnet schools should stress their distinctive features at the expense of effective instruction in those elements of the curriculum which are common to all schools. We have been concerned to avoid the impression that magnet school grants were "funding for grooviness," and have recently instituted an annual recognition program which seeks to identify those schools which are most effective at educating "ordinary" urban students.

- A corollary of this principle is our preference--in most cases--for magnet schools which do not draw all of their students city-wide, but which are "ordinary" district schools serving students who attend for no other reason than place of residence, as well as other students who are volunteers, and which educate the two groups of students together in every respect.

The advantage of this approach is that the energy and continual effort to improve instruction which are characteristic of schools where parents have a choice are made available also to children whose parents would not take advantage of such a choice. In any population, only those parents who are more actively engaged with the education of their children are likely to select a magnet school, and this is often used as an argument that such schools tend to create inequities among students. By distributing those "choosing" (and thus influential) parents among as many schools as possible, benefits are created for children whose parents have not chosen and are not likely to be actively involved in strengthening the school.

In addition, we do not encourage "magnet programs" within schools which serve a select group of students under substantially separate conditions, though we have funded such programs in one school each in Brockton and New Bedford. My evaluation of the impact of such options in Chicago concluded that--though better than nothing--they tended to create inequitable special opportunities and to evade real integration

- Experience has shown that certain measures are important to the successful development and implementation of a program of magnet schools. Last May I spelled out twelve of these measures in a "discussion paper" on student recruitment for Boston administrators, and the paper subsequently appeared in Equity and Choice I, 3 (Spring 1985) and in Report No. 5 to the Federal District Court.

UNIVERSALIZING CHOICE AS THE BASIS FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS

The Student Desegregation Plan ordered by Judge W. Arthur Garrity in May 1975 made a process of school applications the basis of assignments in Boston. Each year since the parent or guardian of every student has been given the opportunity to indicate up to three school preferences, and assignments have sought so far as possible to respect these preferences.

It has not generally been realized that the great majority of Boston parents who take the trouble to return an application receive one of their choices. This has in part been possible because magnet schools have served roughly one student in four (one in two at the high school level), and because the location of schools assures that many parents can be given an assignment to the nearest school consistent with the desegregation mandate.

According to an analysis of the assignments for Sepotember 1983, 36,752 Boston students had received their first choice assignments for grades K-12, with another 2,832 receiving second or third choices. Eighty-nine percent of the parents who indicated choices were given one of them. Another 4,921 students, or 8.7% of the total enrollment of the system, did not receive one of their three choices (many only indicated one choice), while no applicationa were returned for 8,766 students. Most of the latter were reassigned to their opresent schools or (if at a transition opoint) to their district school, while less than 3% were assigned to citywide high schools.

We observed in our February 1984 Report on Desegregation in Massachusetts that "a variety of procedural requirements, developed to assure impartiality, to prevent anticipated abuses, and to meet other objectives either of the Court or of the school system, have created a popular impression that the Plan is rigid and irrational, and could be replaced by a simpler method of asigning and transferring students. Monitoring of the assignment system over the past year confirms its complexity and impartiality, and suggests that changes should be made only with great care and a good understanding of their possible unanticipated consequences."

Such changes were made, with approval of the Court, in February 1985. In two of Boston's eight residential districts a new method of assigning students was implemented on an experimental basis. White students were offered guaranteed places in any of a list of schools in Black neighborhoods, while Black students were offered such places in schools in white neighborhoods. More choices were offered than had previously been available, in other words, but there was not a choice of attending a school which would not be desegregated.

A full assessment of this new approach to assignments will be provided in our April 1986 Report on Desegregation in Massachusetts, but review of the process last Spring and of the enrollment this Fall suggest that it was a substantial success.

Another change was the designation of twenty-one schools city-wide for a "recruitment incentive plan" which allowed them to recruit students from outside of their assigned attendance areas. In most cases very little was done to implement this program last Spring, but a substantial part of the state desegregation funding to Boston for 1985-86 is committed to a major effort of recruitment for 1986-87 assignments.

The other Massachusetts city which has made choice the central mechanism of student assignments is Cambridge. Whereas in Boston the choices--until this year--were only between one of the city-wide magnet schools and a designated district school, in Cambridge parents are able to indicate a preference for **any** school at the appropriate grade level. A full discussion of the Cambridge Plan has been prepared by my colleague Michael Alves (see below).

CONCLUSIONS

Approximately four out of five of the minority students in Massachusetts and one out of five of the white students are enrolled in school systems which offer parents the opportunity to make **choices** about the public school which their children will attend, and which foster such choices through deliberate efforts to increase the distinctiveness of various schools and to provide accurate parent information.

This does not mean, of course, that all of these students attend a school which their parents have chosen; after all, a number of cities have only one high school and any choice which is exercised is among programs within the school.

What it does indicate is that **choice** has become an accepted policy in school systems which represent a significant share of the public school enrollment in Massachusetts. In fifteen urban school districts there are planning efforts **currently** afoot, funded with state desegregation funds, to extend the choices already available. The superintendents of most of these districts, chaired by Worcester's John Durkin, meet on a regular basis to coordinate their efforts and to provide mutual support. This Spring they will be hosting a conference on "Diversity and Choice in Public Education."

To a remarkable extent, then, **family choice** has become a normal aspect of the organization of public education in

Massachusetts. It has not done so because of a "master plan" or one-time policy decision, but in a succession of incremental steps which have been described briefly above. Each step has demonstrated some of the virtues of public school choice, just as it has made us aware of problems which such choice may cause. This incremental process has undoubtedly preserved us from making serious mistakes with unanticipated negative consequences.

The landmarks in this porocess have been:

- the direct action by Black parents to make choices for their children, by seeking available seats in Boston and other cities and then in suburban districts

- the insistence by the State Board that parent choices be supported when helpful to integration and prevented when harmful

- the development, on a pilot basis, of a few urban magnet schools

- the generous financial support, by the Massachusetts Legislature, of construction, transportation, urban/suburban transfers, and magnet schools

- the shift, in state equity strategy, from mandatory to voluntary approaches, with no relaxation in the standard applied to their outcomes

- the enthusiastic adoption, by parents, staff, and superintendents in most Massachusetts cities, of the idea of enhanced family choice as the basis not only for equity and integration but also for educational improvement

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

The strong support for family choice in Massachusetts could lead to any of the following new steps;

- The development of systems of school choice (as opposed to the present haphazard transfer arrangements) in communities with few minority students; though desegregation gave the impetus to such systems, their educational benefits have been so solid that there seems no reason to limit them to a few communities.

- The continuing **differentiation** of public schools in those communities which are consciously promoting family choice. Every public school is not good for every child, nor can any school meet the expectations of every parent. We can become much bolder than we have been so far in encouraging a wide diversity of philosophy and approach among public schools.

- "Making the City a Magnet Again," to borrow the title of a paper which I gave at a national conference some years ago. Suburban schools will never be as distinctive and flavorful as urban schools could be, drawing upon the cultural, institutional and human resources of a city. Despite some timid experiments in the late 1970s, there has not yet been a serious attempt in Massachusetts to draw suburban 0tudents into urban schools.

BUREAU OF EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Twelve elements of successful desegregation recruitment

Scores of Massachusetts public schools in a dozen cities have carried out successful "recruitment" efforts to achieve race desegregation with a minimum of mandatory assignments. Certain elements have been important in these efforts. These steps have not always been carried out in the same order, and two or more are often carried out at the same time. Distinction is made between the steps which the school system should take and those which should be planned and initiated at the school level with system support.

SCHOOL SYSTEM ACTIONS

1. Develop a clear and simple policy controlling applications, assignments, and transfers. Make sure that all staff in contact with parents (teachers, principals, office staff) understand it thoroughly and can explain it clearly. Distribute it widely (in simple, 1,2,3 form) through the press and special handouts.

2. Designate a single office to handle all assignment and transfer requests, and staff this office adequately to help schools in outreach to parents.

3. Make clear to all employees, and particularly to staff of schools designated for desegregation recruitment, what is expected of them. Make sure that staff of other schools understand that they must not hinder recruitment.

4. Conduct city-wide surveys of parent interests and choices among educational possibilities. Preferably, present options rather than open-ended items. (see Clinchy article in Equity and Choice I,2).

5. Support (with resources, flexibility in requirements and procedures) the efforts of each school to develop a distinctive character or theme, within the broad policies and objectives of the system. If such efforts cannot, in some cases, be permitted, it should be for sound policy reasons and not on technicalities or because of vested interests.

6. Orchestrate the individual school themes in response to overall parent and student demand. It would defeat the purpose of the effort if every school selected the same emphasis!

LOCAL SCHOOL ACTIONS (note that these need not start after 1-6)

7. Understand clearly who it is the school is trying to recruit; if this means Hispanic students, for example, both the program development and the outreach must keep this in the forefront.

8. Involve all staff and active parents of the school in defining the distinctiveness of the school, and how that can be built upon to provide an even better education. Note "effective school" research on the importance of a shared sense of educational mission and philosophy. If available, draw upon survey results (see #4) to identify a "marketable" theme. This must be a choice among possibilities, not an assertion that the school is "all things to all men" (and women!). It's not enough to say, "We're a wonderful school"; choice should not operate on the basis of some schools being better and some worse.

9. Recognize that some parents whose children are presently in the school may be attracted away by another option, and accept that this is OK; the school should have enough confidence in the particular direction which it has selected to accept that it will not be best for every child. Some teachers might also find another option closer to their own ideas about the ideal situation. The goal, after all, is that every child, teacher and parent be in an optimal situation for that person.

10. Reorganize or enrich instruction in appropriate ways to enhance the distinctiveness of the school. Preferably this should not be an "add-on" program which only a few children will take part in, but a "flavor" of instructional strategy which makes the school distinctive for all students. The goal is not to become a "super school" (except to the extent that we want that for every school) but to be a school which satisfies enough racially-diverse parents very much because it reflects their goals and concerns for their children.

11. Tell your story by every means possible, especially by parent-to-parent contacts. Provide plenty of opportunities for prospective parents to talk with teachers. Don't "hype" the school: simply present honestly what you are and what you are working to become.

12. Follow through on every parent who expresses an interest, and contact parents who are disappointed in their applications to other schools. One individual contact is worth a hundred fliers. Continue contacts over the summer to assure that parents don't get "cold feet". Check with new parents after a couple of weeks of school to find out whether they have been disappointed. If they are happy with the school, they will do half the work of recruitment the second year!

Charles Glenn, Director

May 3rd 1985

ENROLLMENT DATA

The pages which follow detail the number of students attending "magnet schools" in Massachusetts, distinguishing when appropriate between those who have volunteered and those assigned on the basis of residence. Often the latter, of course, have chosen not to attend another magnet school, or a non-public school.

These figures do not exhaust the extent of public school choice in Massachusetts. Most school systems have some system under which parents may arrange to enroll their children in a school other than that to which they would normally be assigned, generally with the proviso that the parents must arrange for transportation. Such arrangements are commonplace nationwide.

Almost unique to Massachusetts, however, is the urban/suburban Metco program, under which 3,437 minority students (almost all of them Black) resident in Boston or Springfield attend suburban schools, with their tuition and costs paid by the State. The school systems participating as host communities are:

SYSTEM	NUMBER OF METCO STUDENTS
Arlington	60
Bedford	49
Belmont	100
Braintree	82
Brookline	300
Cohasset	48
Concord	108
Concord/Carlisle	65
Dover/Sherborn	40
East Longmeadow	56
Framingham	123
Foxborough	36
Hampden	30
Hampden/Wilbraham	7
Hingham	50
Lexington	280
Lincoln	89
Lincoln/Sudbury	96
Longmeadow	52
Lynnfield	30
Marblehead	67
Melrose	109
Natick	50
Needham	134

SYSTEM	NUMBER OF METCO STUDENTS
Newton	415
Reading	102
Rockland	4
Scituate	40
Sharon	72
Sudbury	70
Southwick	20
Swampscott	64
Wakefield	35
Walpole	42
Wayland	119
Wellesley	180
Weston	188
Westwood	25

In addition to the school systems operating magnet schools, the following are engaged in a magnet school planning process, funded by this Bureau:

Fall River
Lawrence
New Bedford (operated magnet schools prior to adoption of a desegregation plan based upon redistricting)
Revere
Salem

Methuen has adopted, but not implemented, a desegregation plan, and is now considering its revision to include a magnet school.

The following systems are planning or implementing an expansion of their magnet schools:

Boston	new voluntary assignment measures involving 35 schools
Brockton	comprehensive magnet/equity planning process
Holyoke	secondary school planning process
Lawrence	magnet planning within the context of a comprehensive desegregation plan now in place
Lowell	adding an eighth magnet elementary school
Lynn	comprehensive magnet/equity planning process
Springfield	three high schools become magnets in 1986; planning to add an elementary and intermediate magnet school in 1986
Worcester	secondary school planning process

In summary:

systems operating magnet schools	9
systems planning/developing magnet schools	6
systems hosting "Metco" students	38

BOSTON

Boston implemented a plan desegregating about half of its schools in September 1974, and a more comprehensive plan the following year. The 1975 plan expanded the "magnet school" feature which had already emerged with state encouragement in the late 1960s. See the discussion above, pages 21-23.

In February 1985 the Court permitted Boston to expand the system of parent choice which had previously applied only to "magnet schools." The new measures got off to an uneven start as reflected in Fall 1985 enrollments, but hold substantial promise for the expansion of choice in 1986.

The data below present only the "magnet schools." Information on the other options introduced in 1985 will be provided in our April Report on Desegregation. Only one set of enrollment figures is given for the magnet schools, since all of their enrollment is voluntary. All data is of November 21, 1985; Boston's October 1st enrollment figures are not reliable.

Magnet Schools		VOLUNTARY		
		Black	White	Other
Boston High	9-12	384	155	138
Boston Latin Academy	7-12	524	665	235
Boston Latin School	7-12	580	1,211	502
Boston Technical	9-12	520	233	333
Copley Square	9-12	277	116	108
English High	9-12	911	267	411
Madison Park High	9-12	985	196	364
Umana Technical	7-12	572	197	202
King Middle	6 - 8	238	85	128
Mackey Middle	6 - 8	201	73	99
Wheatley Middle	6 - 8	174	69	83
Curley	K - 5	152	62	66
Guild	K - 5	118	40	33
Hale	K - 5	110	32	43
Haley	K - 5	162	69	63
Hennigan	K - 5	253	106	253
Hernandez	K - 5	46	29	120
Jackson	K - 5	285	128	282
McKay	K - 5	210	90	72
Ohrenberger	K - 5	247	109	117
Trotter	K - 5	339	140	155
TOTAL		7,288	4,072	3,807

BROCKTON

Brockton, with a small but growing percentage of minority students, began the desegregation process in 1983. The Arnone School was designated as a magnet, and a community-wide process began to develop a comprehensive equity and desegregation plan. This plan should be submitted to the Board within the next months.

Magnet School

		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Arnone	1-6	21	64	5	116	397	239
West Junior High	7-8	11	32	4	46	637	21
TOTAL		32	96	9	162	1,034	260

CAMBRIDGE

The Cambridge Public Schools developed several magnet schools before adoption of a comprehensive desegregation plan. Since these schools did not eliminate the isolation of minority students, Cambridge went through a broad-based process of redistricting for desegregation. With the achievement of a racially-balanced enrollment in each school, the decision was made to develop a method of making future assignments which would provide choice to every parent and would permit the system to adjust enrollments with the changing demography of the city.

A longer description of Cambridge is included in this report.

The list below treats every Cambridge elementary school as a "magnet," since each of these schools enrolls many if not most of its students from outside its "neighborhood" on a voluntary basis.

Magnet Schools

		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Agassiz	K-8	50	59	30	67	153	41
Fitzgerald	K-8	20	36	14	117	212	84
Fletcher	K-8	40	79	39	83	210	84
Haggerty	K-6	22	15	7	39	69	13
Harrington	K-8	82	115	61	142	377	106
Kennedy	K-8	57	72	42	60	195	44
Roberts	K-4	47	148	28	104	179	64
King	K-8	121	190	59	184	281	90
Longfellow	K-8	42	143	147	51	243	183
Morse	K-8	60	87	22	121	178	45
Peabody	K-8	102	135	46	131	207	59
Tobin	K-8	176	222	95	193	321	102
Graham/Parks	K-8	58	109	12	150	166	31
TOTAL		877	1,410	602	1,442	2,791	946

HOLYOKE

The enrollement in Holyoke is about half minority (mostly Hispanic) at the elementary level, and the system implemented a comprehensive desegregation plan in 1981 based upon primary and upper elementary schools. Most students are assigned on the basis of residence. Holyoke is now in the process of developing desegregation and equal opportunity measures at the secondary level.

Four elementary schools receive part of their enrollment from voluntary magnet transfers. The Morgan is a small school in a heavily-populated and predominantly Hispanic neighborhood; it was not possible to desegregate it through assignments without placing an undue burden on minority students. A magnet program has been developed to attract Anglo students in and Hispanic students out to the McMahon School. This program includes an "extended day" (7:30 to 5:00) and a reading enrichment program.

The Kelly and Lawrence Schools, both in Hispanic neighborhoods, also have magnet components to attract Anglo students in addition to those assigned under the desegregation plan.

Magnet Schools

		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Kelly	4-6	5	93	25	19	204	338
Lawrence	4-6	4	84	71	28	204	405
McMahon	K-3	5	108	168	22	259	225
Morgan	K-3	3	77	3	19	100	195
TOTAL		17	362	267	88	767	1,163

LOWELL

The minority enrollment in Lowell is relatively low, and it has not proved necessary for for the School Committee to adopt a comprehensive desegregation plan. Lowell has stressed the development of alternative approaches to elementary schooling, on the basis of a broad survey of parents, with adoption of a magnet school plan in 1981. There are currently seven magnet schools, of which two (Arts and City) attract all of their students city-wide on the basis of a highly distinctive theme, while the other five provide a variety of incentives to attract a portion of their enrollment for the sake of desegregation.

In 1986 the City and Arts schools will begin operating in the renovated Lowell Trade facility, after extensive improvements funded with 90% state assistance.

Magnet Schools		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Arts	K-8	17	100	31	17	100	31
City	K-8	18	125	75	18	125	75
Bartlett	K-8	0	41	9	24	417	258
Green	K-3	0	6	0	6	80	104
Greenhalge	K-4	1	0	29	8	409	165
Lincoln	K-5	7	0	43	14	187	89
Rogers	K-8	0	100	0	19	449	149
TOTAL		43	372	187	106	1,767	871

LYNN

Lynn is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive race desegregation plan.

The Washington Community School has functioned since 1978 as a magnet school to attract white students and so reduce racial imblance.

The new plan is expected to include additional magnet options.

Magnet School		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Washington Community	K-6	0	53	o	81	175	154

MEDFORD

Medford adopted a racial balance plan in 1970 in response to a suit brought by Black parents and to pressure from the State. By 1980 this plan required revision to accommodate declining enrollments and the need to close schools.

As a result of the new plan, adopted in 1982, the magnet program has expanded from K-2 to K-8, and is now located at the Brooks/Hobbs complex.

Magnet School		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Brooks/Hobbs	K-8	5	75	0	111	389	12

SPRINGFIELD

The Springfield Public Schools, under order from the State Board, adopted a comprehensive K-6 desegregation plan, based on primary and upper elementary schools, and implemented it with great care and success in 1974. Junior High Schools had been partially desegregated with closing and construction in the late 1960s. A High School desegregation plan will be implemented with completion of a new high school (in 1986) and improvements for two other high schools, all funded with 90% state assistance.

The elementary plan did not desegregate a few heavily-Hispanic schools, including a new facility (New North School). Springfield has gradually developed magnet school options which attract additional students into or out of schools to enhance desegregation as well as to increase the number of options available to parents. The system is currently developing one additional elementary and one additional junior high magnet school. Total "magnet" enrollment (including high schools) will double in 1986-87.

Magnet Schools

		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Armory Street	K,5-6	31	79	43	109	233	195
Brightwood	K-4	31	81	0	70	124	263
Kensington Ave.	K-4	77	11	11	145	263	70
Lincoln	K-4	27	57	0	45	123	409
New North	5-6	115	232	1	204	316	570
Sixteen Acres	K-4	0	0	104	92	248	125
Sumner Avenue	K-4	63	31	6	127	225	87
Warner	K,5-6	74	77	18	139	198	33
White Street	K-4	0	0	13	88	214	128
Chestnut Street	7-9	33	81	1	120	166	670
Van Sickle	7-9	0	0	82	289	354	311
TOTAL		451	649	279	1,289	2,464	2,861

WORCESTER

The Worcester Public Schools began implementation of a desegregation plan in September 1981. This plan included a certain amount of redistricting and program relocation, and also the development of magnet schools. The first three magnet schools were implemented in September 1982, attracting additional students to enhance desegregation, three more in September 1983, two in September 1984, and two in September 1985.

Magnet schools in Worcester have stressed the development of a "theme" which reflects a particular teaching style or philosophy of education.

Magnet Schools

		VOLUNTARY			TOTAL		
		Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other
Adams Street	K-6	38	37	33	38	103	38
Burncoat Prep.	K-6	35	36	26	60	200	74
Canterbury	K-6	31	20	107	40	216	121
Clark Street	K-8	21	246	31	60	258	99
Columbus Park	K-8	40	70	58	62	227	82
Gage Street	K-6	20	10	54	38	128	71
Harlow Street	K-2	21	8	39	36	172	53
Mill-Swan	K-6	16	41	17	25	140	28
St. Nicholas Ave.	K-6	0	39	0	10	192	181
Burncoat Middle	7-8	0	27	2	26	414	199
TOTAL		222	534	367	395	2,050	946

SUMMARY OF VOLUNTARY ENROLLMENTS, FALL 1985

Magnet Schools	Black	White	Other	Total	Schools
Boston	7,288	4,072	3,807	15,167	21
Brockton	32	96	9	139	2
Cambridge	877	1,410	602	2,889	13
Holyoke	17	362	267	646	4
Lowell	43	372	187	602	7
Lynn	0	53	0	53	1
Medford	5	75	0	75	2
Springfield	451	649	279	1,379	11
Worcester	222	534	367	1,123	10
TOTAL	8,935	7,623	5,518	22,073	71

These figures include only students transferring into these schools from outside their attendance zones voluntarily; the total enrollment of these magnet schools is 37,491.

Of the 71 schools listed, only two (in Brockton) are operating "magnet programs" which are not fully integrated into the school. In all other cases the benefits of the magnet school are shared equally by "volunteer" students and "assigned" students. Thus more than 37,000 students participate in all aspects of magnet schools.

Metco (urban/suburban transfers) 3,437 students, almost all Black

Other

As noted above (page 22), more than 39,000 Boston students received one of their choices for a school assignment; 24,000 of these were to non-magnet schools. The four Springfield high schools are city-wide, with almost all students admitted to their school of choice. These and other similar arrangements bring the total attendance by choice in Massachusetts desegregating school systems to approximately 60,000.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

The fifteen cities implementing or preparing to implement desegregation plans which include the promotion of parent choice enrolled (in 1984-5) 206,985 students, or 27% of the public school enrollment of all cities and towns. This included 78% of the Hispanic, 71% of the Black, 47% of the Asian and 20% of the White enrollment.

The thirty-eight communities participating in the Metco program enrolled 114,289 or 15% of the total, including 16% of the White, 8% of the Black (mostly attributable to the Metco program), 4% of the Hispanic, and a full 20% of the Asian enrollment of all cities and towns.

MAXIMIZING PARENTAL CHOICE AND EFFECTIVE DESEGREGATION OUTCOMES: THE CAMBRIDGE PLAN

by Michael J. Alves, Project Director
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POLICY CONTEXT

For more than a quarter century, the constitutional imperative to eliminate state sanctioned or intentional racial segregation in public schools has been the most controversial issue in American education, and central to this continuing controversy has been the issue of pupil assignments. Whether court ordered or voluntarily adopted, each desegregation plan since the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 has had to come to grips with the twofold problems of achieving a racially unitary school system and providing enhanced educational opportunities for minority and poor children. In attempting to resolve these dual equity concerns, governmental authorities have employed a variety of mandatory and voluntary pupil assignment strategies including redistricting of individual school attendance districts, pairing, geocoding or busing to non-contiguous schools, magnet schools, optional attendance zones, and controlled transfers.

A fundamental problem facing federal, state, and local school officials is that the implementation of conventional methods of assignment often militate against the attainment of both equity and educational excellence. For example, while compulsory plans which reassign students on the basis of their home residence are administratively efficient, such measures tend to generate intense community conflict, have no intrinsic educational merit, and, over time, are particularly vulnerable to demographic shifts and other segregative

forces beyond the control of local school officials who are held responsible for implementation of the plan. And while voluntary or free choice plans tend to mediate the politics of desegregation, give school officials greater flexibility, and provide a greater opportunity for substantive educational reform, such plans have generally failed to reduce instances of unlawful segregation on a systemwide basis. Therefore, there is a major public policy need to develop new administrative processes that more effectively accommodate the varied legal, political, educational, and organizational interests inherent in most desegregation disputes.

THE PROBLEM AND PROMISE OF CHOICE

Disenchantment with conventional desegregation remedies has recently generated renewed interest in the development of alternative student assignment policies that maximize parental choice among desegregating schools. That desegregation disputes are now centering around the issue of increased personal "choice" is, of course, nothing new: since the Supreme Court outlawed state-imposed or intentional racial separation in public education in 1954, free choice of voluntary student assignment plans have been the preferred mode of desegregation for the vast majority of state and local school officials across the United States.

However, both the historical record and the research evidence strongly indicate that when employed as the **only** desegregation technique of a school district, such strategies as systemwide free choice, open enrollment, permissive transfers, and magnet schools have invariably failed to resolve de jure segregation disputes. Moreover, the literature informs us that although voluntary desegregation plans typically enjoy biracial community support, such plans have been particularly ineffective in reducing racial isolation among schools when the proportion of minority students in the school system exceeds 30%.

Despite the apparent weight of the evidence that voluntary plans have generally failed to produce effective desegregation outcomes on a systemwide basis, strategies to increase parent and student choice remain a recurring and problemmatic theme in the continuing story of school desegregation. In order to more fully

understand the nature of this problem and its policy implications, it is instructive to review the impact of conventional free choice assignment strategies.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Following the Brown decision and particularly after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, literally hundreds of Southern school districts adopted so-called "freedom of choice" plans as their sole desegregation technique. These plans were developed under the legal theory that since the Supreme Court had abolished state-sanctioned dual school systems, black and white students were thereby "free" to attend any public school they wished regardless of their race. It has been reported that by the mid-1960s more than 2,000 de jure segregated school systems were operating some type of "free choice" plan that allowed parents to annually choose where they wanted their child to attend public school.

While conceptually these plans extended the power of choice to all parents, the record clearly shows that such plans rarely resulted in the cross-racial selection of schools. For example, an analysis of free choice plans in 37 Louisiana parish school districts reveals that from 1963 to 1967 only 5.4% of the districts' 159,768 black students elected to attend formerly all white schools and only two or .00075% of the white students voluntarily enrolled in formerly all black schools. And, in Gould, Arkansas and New Kent County, Virginia no white students enrolled in black schools.

According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, freedom of choice plans failed to dismantle racially dual school systems primarily because they were never intended to actually facilitate race mixing in schools. During a series of public hearings in 1966, the Commission discovered that black parents were routinely discouraged and even physically threatened from enrolling their children in white schools. No public transportation was provided for voluntary desegregation. And when black students did enroll in white schools, they were often harassed by teachers and administrators, placed in special education or academically segregated classrooms, and were otherwise coerced into returning to all black schools.

Overall, systemwide or unrestricted free choice plans were at best "token" remedial measures, and with its Green v. New Kent County decision in 1968, the Supreme Court declared that leaving desegregation up to individual choice was not a legally sufficient remedy to unconstitutional segregation when there are "other ways" with which to convert to a "unitary and non-racial school system."

Moreover, it was precisely because of the failure of free choice plans in such communities as Jackson City, Tennessee, Mobile, Alabama, and Charlotte-Meklenburg, North Carolina that the federal courts adopted more stringent remedial standards in the early 1970s. It was during this period of judicial activism that the courts formulated the remedial principle commonly referred to as the doctrine of "maximum feasible school desegregation" which sanctioned the imposition of mandatory or compulsory student reassignment measures. In a landmark decision in 1971, the Supreme Court held that:

> Having once found a (Constitutional) violation, the district judge should make every effort to achieve the GREATEST DEGREE OF ACTUAL DESEGREGATION taking into account the PRACTICALITIES of the situation (emphasis added).

This meant that the lower courts could hold local school officials accountable for the actual elimination of "racially identifiable" public schooling, and in so doing, "racial ratios" could be used as a "starting point" in determining the extent to which a defendant school board satisfied its Constitutional obligation not to segregate students on the basis of race.

Ultimately, the legal test of any desegregation plan is that it "work." And, with respect to "choice," the federal courts have affirmed that, like any desegregation technique, free choice plans are permissible only to the extent that they actually reduce instances of unlawful segregation among schools.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

The concept of parental choice has also raised constitutional concerns in other regions of the country. In response to the passage of state racial balance mandates

(e.g., no public school shall be more than 50% non-white), numerous Northern school districts adopted open enrollment or permissive transfer policies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Under these plans, local school officials retained individual school attendance boundaries--neighborhood schools--and allowed minority and majority race students to transfer into different schools so long as the new assignment had a positive racial balance effect on both the sending and receiving schools.

However, such racial balance requirements were rarely enforced and, in most instances, open enrollment merely worked as an escapoe mechanism for white students fleeing minority imbalanced schools. In Boston, for example, the federal district court found that during the eight-year operation of the school committee's open enrollment policy, more than 6,000 white students were permitted school transfers in violation of the Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Act. As in the South, black parents in Boston were provided little, if any, information about their assignment options. School officials provided no public transportation to black students seeking admission to racially isolated white schools, until pressured to do so by the State. And the federal court subsequently found that open enrollment played a major role in violating the Constitutional rights of minority schoolchildren in the Boston Public Schools:

> A desegregation remedy must do more than give effect to the "free choices" of students and parents, when the effect of these choices is simply to maintain segregation.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

As a result of the historical failure of systemwide free choice plans to demonstrably reduce unlawful segregation among schools, state and federal authorities have limited the use of choice in more recent desegregation cases to the operation of a relatively few magnet or specialized schools. As a voluntary desegregation technique, magnet schools have evolved from the alternative schools movement in the late 1960s and presume that conventional free choice plans also failed to dismantle racially dual school systems because white parents were never provided with a compelling reason to voluntarily enroll their children in all black schools. Therefore, the operating premise behind the magnet concept is that if a racially identifiable school is made more distinctive or educationally attractive, parents would

be more willing to voluntarily enroll their children in spite of the school's dominant racial make-up.

During the past ten years, magnet schools have received considerable attention as an innovative desegregation strategy and are currently in operation in at least 138 school districts across the United States. At the elementary level, magnet schools tend to provide parents with educational incentives that feature alternative learning environments or unique teaching styles. While secondary magnets attempt to attract parents and students on the basis of enriched curriculum offerings or academic themes that are not readily available elsewhere in the system.

In general, the research indicates that, when used as a voluntary component to a mandatory assignment plan, magnet schools tend to provide more stable desegregation outcomes than non-magnet desegregating schools. However, there is no evidence that magnet-only plans have worked to desegregate any school district with a significant proportion of minority students (over 30%). And although magnet schools typically provide enhanced educational opportunities for minority and majority race students, there is no evidence that these benefits positively impact a system's non-magnet school students. In spite of the potential of magnet schools as a positive force in improving urban education, a recent U.S. Department of Education survey reveals that such schools and programs of choice on average serve only 5% of the nation's desegregating school children (in Buffalo and Milwaukee which have implemented extensive voluntary desegregation programs, less than 30% of the schools are magnets).

Despite the apparent ineffectiveness of conventional voluntary desegregation techniques, federal, state, and local authorities continue to advance the concept of "choice" as a viable alternative to mandatory assignment plans. However, what is noteworthy about the current conflict surrounding the use of choice is that it appears to be generating cross-racial support for the argument that the federal courts have been perhaps too inflexible in interpreting the doctine of "maximum feasible desegregation" and have imposed rigid assignment policies which have resulted in unnecessary busing, middle-class flight, and an erosion of public confidence in desegregating schools.

For example, in Chicago, middle class flight and the relative scarcity of white students in public schools has apparently convinced even black school authorities that the

implementation of a partial desegregation plan which limits choice to a few magnet schools is an acceptable political and educational "trade-off" to the actual elimination of racially identifiable public schooling. And in Boston, Denver and Milwaukee, the demand for increased parent choice is being presented as an equitable substitute to court-ordered assignment plans which over time have worked to limit the educational options of black and other minority students. (In Milwaukee magnet schools enroll less than 5% of the system black students.)

In light of this assignment controversy, it may well be both timely and prudent to examine how another urban school system, Cambridge, Massachusetts, has apparently reconciled the twofold problems of increased parent choice and maximum feasible school desegregation. By examining the Cambridge experience, one has the rare opportunity to test the validity of the conventional hypothesis that increased parent choice cannot produce effective desegregation and education related outcomes on a citywide basis when the proportion of minority students in the system exceeds 30% and when the majority of the students in the system are from low income families.

THE CAMBRIDGE PLAN

On March 3, 1981 the Cambridge School Committee adopted the final phase of its long-range school desegregation plan. This plan was preceded by the implementation of two interim plans in 1979 and 1980 and was subsequently approved by the Massachusetts State Board of Education on March 24, 1981 as a "self-correcting, stable, and equitable solution" to the chronic problem of racial isolation in the Cambridge Public Schools. Since Cambridge has one public high school and no junior high or middle schools, the desegregation process has directly impacted only those schools which enroll kindergarten through eighth grade students.

A distinctive feature of Cambridge's final plan was that it abolished all individual school attendance boundaries at the K-8 level and introduced an alternative student assignment policy that aims at maximizing competition and choice among desegregating schools. Under this policy, which has been described as "systemwide controlled choice," no child is to be assigned to a public school on the basis of home residence and all parents are to be given the explicit opportunity to select and gain admission to their preferred desegregating schools on a citywide basis:

> This (assignment) policy is designed to provide MAXIMUM CHOICE for parents in selecting the schools their children will attend within the constraints of available space and state and federal desegregation requirements.

In addition to expanding parent choice among and within schools, the Cambridge assignment policy was also designed to facilitate the attainment of the following desegregation and education related objectives:

1. To resolve a potential de jure segregation dispute with the State Board of Education by reducing racial isolation and preventing resegregation among schools.

2. To increase public support for desegregating urban schools by attracting more school-age children into the public schools.

3. To provide for both stability of assignment and continuing desegregation with a minimal number of mandatory student assignments.

4. To provide enhanced educational opportunities for all students regardless of their race and socioeconomic status.

As the system's "permanent" method of assignment, systemwide controlled choice governs all assignment decisions at the K-8 level including: new admissions, intra-system transfers between schools and the mainstreaming of a substantial number of bilingual and special needs students into regular education classes. And as of November 1, 1985 the policy affected 5,179 students: 54% White, 28% Black, 12% Hispanic, and 6% Asian in thirteen schools (see Table I).

Unlike most systems of "choice" the Cambridge plan establishes a rather narrow desegregation standard. Under the 1981 plan, a desegregated school in Cambridge is defined as having a student enrollment which falls between + or - five percentage points of the racial proportions for the system as a whole. And, although the Cambridge plan allows parents to select at least three schools of choice by rank order of preference, all final assignment decisions are made by the system's student assignment officer subject to the constraints of available space and racial balance.

TABLE I

Systemwide Controlled Choice Assignments

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DISTRIBUTION OF NEW STUDENTS: OCTOBER 1984

School	*Total Assigned	1st Choice	2nd/3rd Choice	Mandatory	% 1st Choice	% 2nd/3rd Choice	% Mandatory	No. White	No. Minority	% White	% Minority
Agassiz	48	45	2	1	94%	4%	2%	25	23	52%	48%
Fitzgerald	67	46	13	8	69%	19%	12%	33	34	49%	51%
Fletcher	58	44	14	-	76%	24%	-	35	23	60%	40%
Haggerty	34	18	7	9	53%	21%	27%	14	20	41%	59%
Graham/Parks	66	60	6	-	91%	9%	-	31	35	47%	53%
Harrington	89	58	17	14	65%	19%	16%	32	57	36%	64%
Kennedy	16	5	8	3	31%	50%	19%	3	13	19%	81%
King	122	97	20	5	80%	16%	4%	77	45	63%	37%
Longfellow	65	43	12	10	66%	19%	15%	48	17	74%	26%
Morse	80	66	11	3	83%	14%	4%	43	37	54%	46%
Peabody	97	82	14	1	85%	14%	1%	66	31	68%	32%
Roberts	80	69	4	7	86%	5%	9%	54	26	67%	33%
Tobin	122	78	40	4	64%	33%	3%	69	53	57%	43%
TOTALS 1984	944	711	168	65	75%	18%	7%	530	414	53%	47%
TOTALS 1983	1,023	760	170	93	74%	17%	9%	555	468	54%	46%
TOTALS 1982	899	681	110	108	76%	12%	12%	444	455	49%	51%

*Assignment Note: Does not include bilingual and special needs students who are initially assigned on a programmatic basis.

Analyzing the Cambridge assignment policy during the past three years of implementation showed that:

- No Cambridge Public School has drifted toward resegregation
- Ten or 76% of the system's formerly racially isolated schools have achieved more stable desegregation outcomes under the instrument of systemwide controlled choice than through the implementation of more conventional reassignment techniques including magnet schools and redistricting
- By eighth grade, minority students are outperforming white students in math and reading citywide in 60% of the public schools, and similar academic achievement gains have been reported for low income students in 50% of the schools.
- Despite the fact that Cambridge has more private than public schools, the proportion of school-aged children living in the city who actually attend the public schools has increased from 79% in 1980 to 85% in 1984.
- Since the implementation of its new student assignment policy the Cambridge Public Schools have achieved more voluntary desegregation than any other school system in Massachusetts history and perhaps even more than any other school system in the United States. As of November 1, 1985, 62% of Cambridge students were enrolled in desegregating schools of choice outside of their old attendance areas.

The major point to be stressed about Cambridge is that since the local school board abolished all individual school attendance districts at the K-8 level, all schools have been forced to compete for students on a citywide basis and all parents have been given maximum freedom to choose an appropriate school within a unitary, integrated school system. Moreover, the above preliminary findings strongly suggest that the Cambridge assignment policy is "working" to facilitate both racial and socioeconomic equity and may well be working to provide enhanced educational opportunities for all school-aged children irrespective of where they live in the city.

DESEGREGATION IMPACT

ACCOMMODATING PARENT CHOICE

During the past three years (1982-84), 91% of all students newly entering the Cambridge Public Schools at the K-8 level have obtained admission to desegregating schools of explicit family choice. Of these 2,152 minority and majority race students, 75% have been assigned to their first choice schools, 16% have received either their second or third choices; and only 9% have been given what can be characterized as a mandatory assignment--when the Student Assignment Officer cannot accommodate a parents' initial school selection.

An interesting development in Cambridge is that the number of so-called mandatory assignments has actually decreased during each year of implementation of controlled choice assignments:

Mandatory Assignments

Year	Number	Percent	Change
1982	108	12%	
1983	93	9%	- 3%
1984	65	7%	- 2%
Totals	266	9%	- 5%

During the 1984 school year, 95% of all newly entering white students were admitted to a school of choice. And while the proportion of minority students mandatorily assigned was 6% higher than for whites, nearly nine out of ten black, Hispanic, and Asian students in Cambridge still have the chance of being enrolled in a school their parents deem most appropriate.

An important factor contributing to this relatively high accommodation rate is that parents are given the opportunity to make multiple school selections. And to facilitate the choice process, staff from the Parent Information Center actively encourage parental efforts in visiting schools before they register their children and otherwise support parents in making informed decisions about schools.

Another feature of the Cambridge policy is that parents are allowed to begin the selection and assignment process in December for the following school year, and actual

assignments are made on a continuous basis through the opening of schools in September. Consequently, the disposition of choice is well distributed among the system's thirteen desegregating schools (see Table II).

Moreover, analysis of the distribution of all parent choices for the 1984 school year indicates that the pattern of choice is remarkably similar for both whites and minority parents. And while individual parents have clear first choice preference, at least three fourths of the schools have shown condiderable strength in attracting cross-racial school selections. The superintendent has made efforts to increase the "attractiveness" of the others.

REDUCING RACIAL ISOLATION

Beyond expanding parent choice, the Cambridge policy has also demonstrated considerable power in preventing resegregation and in further reducingn of racial isolation in at least 80% of the system's formerly segregated schools. After nearly four full years of implementation, controlled choice assignments have worked to produce stable desegregation outcomes on a systemwide basis. The following chart delineates the extent to which the proportion of minority students in each desegregating school varies from the systemwide minority percentage with zero as perfect desegregation:

School	1978	1980	1985
Agassiz	- 12	- 2	- 5
Fitzgerald	- 1	+ 5	+ 3
Fletcher	+ 29	+ 12	- 2
Haggerty	- 13	- 5	- 3
Harrington	- 25	- 18	- 6
Kennedy	- 25	- 29	- 11
King	+ 22	+ 14	+ 3
Longfellow	+ 10	+ 9	+ 3
Morse	- 2	+ 5	+ 6
Peabody	- 15	- 4	+ 6
Roberts	+ 32	+ 30	+ 6
Tobin	+ 20	+ 9	+ 5
Graham/Parks	- 3	- 3	+ 2

A key lesson to be learned about the Cambridge policy is that under the correct conditions "choice" can achieve more effective desegregation outcomes that conventional voluntary and mandatory methods of assignments.

TABLE II

Cambridge Public Schools: Controlled Open Enrollment

Michael Alves
October 1984

DISTRIBUTION OF ALL PARENT-CHOICES BY RACE: 1984-85 SCHOOL YEAR

School	Total Applicants	% Share	White Applicants	% Share White	Minority Applicants	% Share Minority
Tobin	365	16%	221	17%	144	14%
King	351	15%	173	14%	178	17%
Peabody	274	12%	162	13%	112	11%
Agassiz	231	10%	149	12%	82	8%
Fletcher	163	7%	85	7%	78	8%
Harrington	157	7%	95	8%	62	6%
Roberts	155	7%	68	5%	87	8%
Graham/Parks	150	7%	77	6%	73	7%
Longfellow	145	6%	79	6%	66	6%
Morse	123	6%	60	5%	63	6%
Fitzgerald	93	4%	47	4%	46	5%
Haggerty	46	2%	30	2%	16	2%
Kennedy	32	1%	12	1%	20	2%
TOTALS	2,285	100%	1,258	100%	1,027	100%

Data Source: The Massachusetts Department of Education and the Cambridge Public Schools, October 1984

Prior to the adoption of controlled choice, Cambridge had used a variety of assignment strategies including voluntary controlled transfers, magnet schools, redistricting, pairing, and school closures with mixed results.

However, such techniques failed to resolve the desegregation dispute with the State Board of Education, and in 1980 the system experienced a 4% increase in white enrollment decline. Converse, since the implementation of controlled choice, no students have been moved from their assigned school, the rate of declining white enrollment is at a ten-year low (3%), and the potential de jure dispute with the State Board of Education has been resolved. In short, the prediction of the Board, that the Cambridge Plan would be a "stable, self-correcting solution" to racial isolation, has been affirmed.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EDUCATION

A major goal of the Cambridge Plan was that it demonstrably increase public confidence in public education. A crucial measure of public support is the extent to which public schools can attract and retain parental commitment. In 1980, the Massachusetts School Attending Children Report indicates that 79% of the schoolage children living in Cambridge at the K-8 level attended the public schools. During the past two years the figure has risen and stabilized to nearly 85%. In a city with more private than public schools and a substantial middle class of highly educated professionals, this is indeed a significant achievement for a desegregating school system.

The expansion of choice and the operation of an effective Parent Information Center have facilitated and encouraged increased access to enhanced public education in Cambridge.

As of November 1, 1985, 62% of Cambridge students are enrolled in desegregating schools of choice outside of their old attendance areas, and the most recent Basic Skills Test results show that by eighth grade minority students outperform white students in math and/or reading citywide in 60% of the schools. Similar achievement gains have been recorded for low income students in nearly half of the schools.

In Cambridge, not only have parents been given maximum choice within a racially unitary school system, but they also appear to have been given access to schools that are providing enhanced educational opportunities for all students.

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: MINIMUM BASIC SKILLS COMPETENCY TEST RESULTS
(1983-84 School Year)

Comparison of Minority and White Eighth Grade Test Results in Math and Reading

	% Passed	
	Math	Reading
All Whites	84.7	84.4
All Minorities	75.7	73.3
Difference	-9.0	-8.1
Minority Scores by School		
Agassiz	100.0	100.0
King	94.7	89.5
Fitzgerald	94.1	82.4
Morse	90.9	90.9
Longfellow	86.7	86.7
Fletcher	83.3	83.3
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -		
Kennedy	81.3	66.7
Graham/Parks	80.0	60.0
Tobin	70.0	55.0
Peabody	69.6	68.2
Harrington	42.1	47.4

NOTE: Minority students in Agassiz, King, Fitzgerald, Morse, Longfellow, and Fletcher are out-performing White eighth grade students system-wide in Math and/or Reading.

Michael Alves
July 1985

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